

## **Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary**

### **Public Access Information**

#### **Information**

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (FBNMS) is open year-round. FBNMS encompasses 0.25 square miles of the bay. Fagatele Bay contains a pristine coral reef that represents an outstanding example of an Indo-Pacific coral reef ecosystem. Home to hundreds of species of fish, corals and other reef denizens, Fagatele Bay also bears the scars of recent and severe natural disasters. Access to the Bay is either via boat (at person's expense) or through the village of Futiga. The land surrounding the bay belongs to the Fuimaono family who has lived near the bay's slopes for thousands of years. Public access to the Bay is from the main highway within the village of Futiga, where you have to turn off onto a dirt road that passes the landfill (3km inland), and veer past a vegetable farm area to a gate. The only homestead, on your right, is occupied by the assigned caretaker of family lands – Mr. Asuemu Fuimaono.

#### ***Protocol for Land Access to the Bay***

Mr. Asuemu Fuimaono has been designated by the senior village chief or Sa'o of the family Mr. Ulufale Fuimaono with immediate oversight on access to the Bay. Interested visitors or groups to the Bay must check in with Mr. Asuemu prior to passing beyond the gate, register in the log book and receive an informational brochure of FBNMS. Vehicle access beyond the gate is not allowed unless under special conditions/exemptions. The distance from the gate to the first educational sign is 2kms. It is an additional 1.5kms from this spot to the bay. Other trails from the bay to Larsen's Bay or to Taputimu are accessible by foot, with a total distance approximately 5 km long. There is **NO CHARGE** for access to the Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

#### ***Land Access Hours***

**Monday to Friday**, 7.30 a.m to 4.00 p.m and **Saturday**, 7.30 a.m to 1.30 p.m.

**Closed Sundays** unless on special circumstances or arranged 48 hours in advance by the Sanctuary staff. **Parking** -All vehicles must be parked within the allotted parking area on Asuemu Fuimaono's land. No overnight parking, or after operational hours, is allowed.

#### **While at the Bay**

We ask all visitors to respect resource protection etiquette while on hiking trails or enjoying the Bay. Promoting responsible encounters with marine wildlife and their habitats is important for continued resource protection of this special place.

Without paying attention to how you interact in the marine environment, you are running the chance of putting pristine species lives at risk.

Each time someone visits the marine environment they have the wonderful opportunity to encounter marine life. Because we love our marine resources and want you to appreciate them, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries sees every visitor as a potential steward of our sanctuary resources.

### **Lend a hand with trash removal**

Human garbage is one of the greatest threats to marine life. Carry a trash bag with you and pick up litter found along the trail, shore and in the water. Plastic bags, floating debris and monofilament line pose a risk to marine life.

### **Help others to become responsible wildlife watchers and tour operators**

Speak up if you notice other visitors behaving in a way that disturbs the area or marine life or impacts sensitive habitats. Be friendly, respectful and discrete when approaching others. When operating a boat, lead by example and reduce your speed in areas frequented by marine life, anchor properly and encourage others to do the same. Violations of the law should be reported to local authorities

### **Dress Code**

Plan to dress lightly. Casual summer clothing--sandals, shorts and short sleeved shirts are suggested. Rain gear is always appropriate, but remember the high humidity; you may get just as wet wearing your raincoat as not! If you plan to hike, wear sturdy boots. Since the islands are volcanic in nature, lava rubble is found everywhere; it can be rough on lesser quality boots and shoes. Bring your own snorkel equipment.

*NOTE: It is customary in Samoa to cover much of the body. It is expected that men and women cover their shoulders and knees. Even when swimming, be sure to wear modest clothing; no bikinis, please.*